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ABSTRACT

Mohave Community College in Arizona has made a commitment to assessing student outcomes for the purposes of measuring institutional effectiveness and providing data for institutional improvement. The institution must comply with an accreditation mandate to submit an assessment plan and begin implementation by June 1994. Under a plan developed by a task group of faculty and staff, student achievement, goal completion, and student satisfaction would be assessed. Data on student achievement would be collected by assessing the competencies of students at the completion of benchmark courses and of a degree or certificate program. Faculty would be responsible for selecting appropriate instruments and administering them. In addition, student achievement would be assessed by graduate performance on licensure exams and employer satisfaction surveys. Student satisfaction would be measured by surveys of current and former students. Student services would be responsible for designing and administering surveys and collecting data on student goals and completion of goals. Standards have been proposed for basic skills; degree seekers; general education; occupational continuing education; occupational entry/re-entry; personal interest students; and student development. The final step of assessment would be to compare the outcomes with standards. (The report includes the North Central Association position on assessing student achievement, method and process statements, and the assessment review process.) (KP)

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ED 376 872

Assessing Student Outcomes

Mohave Community College

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JC 940 640

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Executive Summary

The institution has made the commitment to assessing student outcomes. The purposes of assessment are measuring institutional effectiveness and providing data for institutional improvement. The institution must also comply with a NCA mandate that it submit an assessment plan and begin implementation by June 1, 1994.

A task group composed of faculty and staff has developed the following plan for assessing student outcomes. Under the proposed plan, outcomes to be assessed would be: student achievement, goal completion and the satisfaction of students with their educational experience. Data on student achievement would be collected by assessing the competencies of students at certain points in their college careers and at the completion of a degree or certificate program. Faculty would be responsible for creating or selecting appropriate instruments and administering them. In addition, student achievement would be assessed by graduate performance on licensure exams and employer satisfaction. The satisfaction of students with their educational experience would be assessed through surveys of current and former students. Responsibility for designing and administering surveys would be the responsibility of student services. Student services would also be responsible for collecting data on student goals and surveying current and former students to determine whether they completed their goals. A standard for each outcome would be established. The final step of assessment would be to compare the outcomes with standards. Institutional research would be responsible for reporting the data.

The schedule calls for the completion of the plan by November 1993, initial implementation by February 1994, and completion of implementation by May 1996.

Introduction

The following report outlines a proposed framework for the assessment of student outcomes. The proposal was developed by a task group of faculty from each campus: Kay Anderson and Becky Radkte (Lake Havasu), Don Plantz and Dina Glasser (Mohave Valley) and Tom McKinney (Kingman). Administrative assistance was provided by Vice Presidents Mike Tacha and Robin Walsh; staff support by Haul Reddick and Don Tucker.

The task of the group was to develop a proposal for assessing student outcomes. The major criteria used in developing the proposal were that an assessment system had to provide information which could be used for institutional improvement and for evaluating institutional effectiveness. In addition, the proposed system had to meet the North Central Association mandate for assessing student outcomes as outlined in the exhibits of this document. To meet the North Central mandate, the College must have adopted and begun implementing a system for assessing student outcomes.

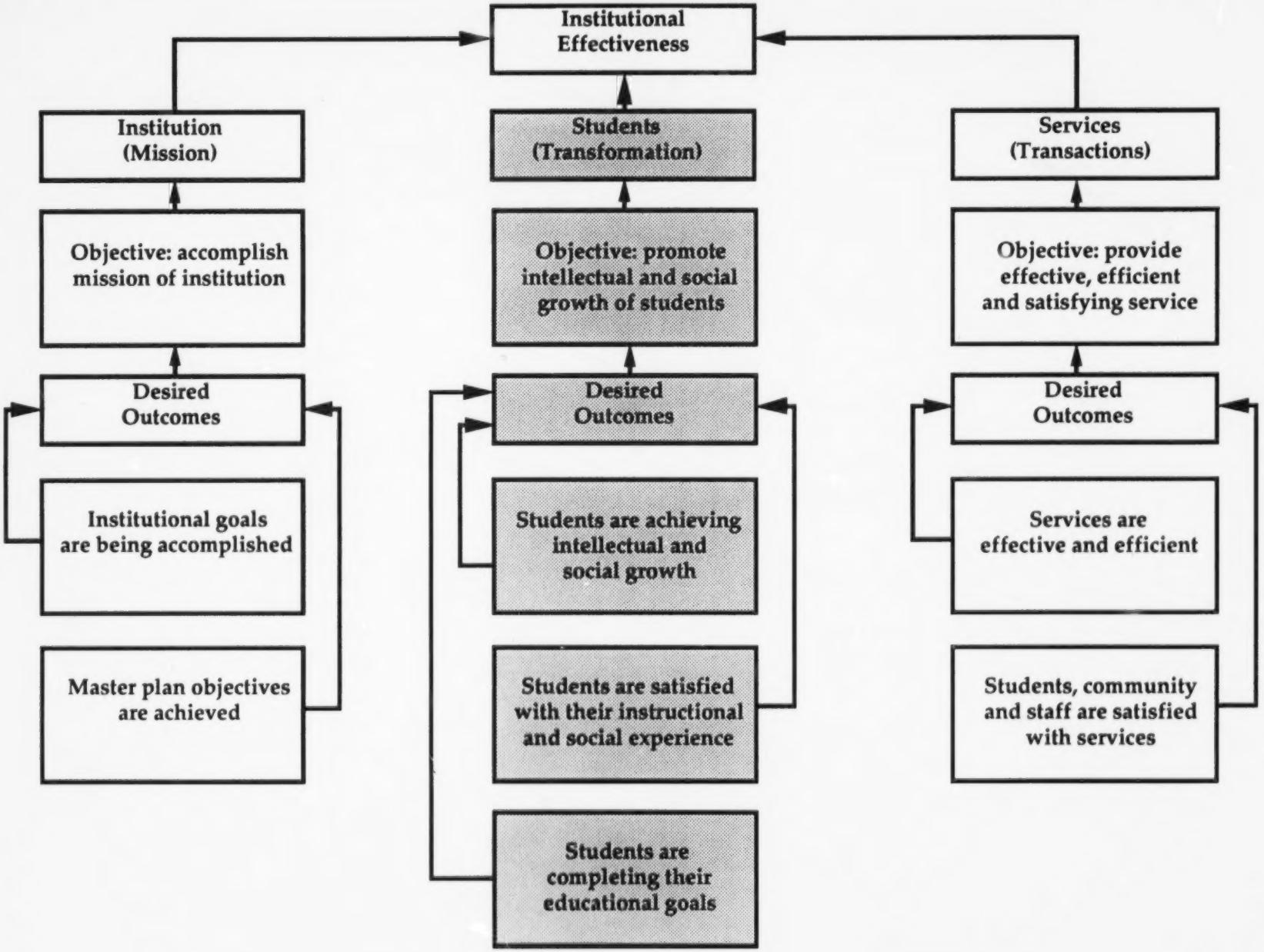
The first section of the report describes how institutional effectiveness can be measured and the role student outcomes plays in evaluating institutional effectiveness. The two subsequent sections define key terms and discuss the rationale underlying the proposal. The next section provides a tabular display of the proposed system and is followed by a section outlining how the system would implemented.

I. Institutional Effectiveness

Measuring student outcomes is one part of evaluating institutional effectiveness. Institutional effectiveness is how well the institution is performing. In assessing institutional performance, three dimensions of effectiveness need to be taken into account. Each dimension is essential and like a leg on a three-legged stool. If any one of the legs of the stool is missing, the stool is useless as a seat. Likewise, a true picture of the institution can only be gained by considering all dimensions of effectiveness.

One of the three dimensions of institutional effectiveness is how well the institution is doing as a whole. Is the institution accomplishing its mission? When the institution is accomplishing its mission, institutional goals are being accomplished and master plan objectives are being achieved. A second dimension is students. Here the basic question is whether students are being transformed intellectually and socially. When the College is accomplishing this function, students are achieving intellectual and social growth and they are satisfied with their instructional and social experience at the institution. A third dimension is services provided to students, community and/or staff. When the institution is functioning well, services are effective and efficient; also students, community and staff are satisfied with those services. The diagram following this section provides an overview of institutional effectiveness; the shaded portion of the diagram highlights student outcomes which is the subject of this report.

The three student outcomes the institution seeks are: student achievement, student completion of goals and student satisfaction. Student achievement is how much students learn and develop while they are attending the institution. Student achievement is an essential outcome because a fundamental purpose of the institution is to help students grow intellectually and socially. Student satisfaction and completion of goals are also important. Students are free to attend or not; they will continue to attend only if they are satisfied with their experience and the institution helps them achieve their goals.


Institutional Effectiveness
Institution (Mission)
Students (Transformation)
Services (Transactions)
Objective: accomplish mission of institution
Objective: promote intellectual and social growth of students
Objective: provide effective, efficient and satisfying service
Desired Outcomes
Desired Outcomes
Desired Outcomes
Institutional goals are being accomplished
Students are achieving intellectual and social growth
Services are effective and efficient
Master plan objectives are achieved
Students are satisfied with their instructional and social experience
Students, community and staff are satisfied with services
Students are completing their educational goals

II. Definitions

In discussions of institutional effectiveness and student assessment, various terms are used. Unfortunately, there are no common and universally accepted definitions for these terms. To promote common understanding, it is proposed that the following definitions be used at MCC.

Institutional effectiveness

The performance of the institution. In an effective institution:

1. Institutional goals are being accomplished.
2. Master plan objectives are being achieved.
3. Students are achieving intellectual and social growth.
4. Students are accomplishing their educational goals.
5. Students are satisfied with the instructional and social experience.
6. Services to students, community and staff are effective and efficient.
7. Students, community and staff are satisfied with the services received.

Institutional goals

Institutional goals set general directions for the College to follow in achieving its mission. Goals are continuing. Everyone in the institution is responsible for contributing to accomplishing institutional goals.

Example: The College seeks to provide the citizens of the county with entry level employment skills in selected occupations.

Objectives

Objectives grow out of and support institutional goals. Objectives are targets which must be reached in order for goals to be accomplished. Each objective has an individual or group responsible for its accomplishment.

Example: In order to accomplish its goal of providing the citizens of the county with entry level employment, the College has established the objective that new vocational programs will be established to meet local needs.

Outcomes

Results. Outcomes are measurements or descriptions of results. No standard, criteria or value judgment is implied. In the case of students, outcomes are the results of attending the College. The three types of student outcomes are: student achievement, goal completion rate and student satisfaction.

Example: One of the outcomes of the rocket science program was that 100% of the students who graduated were employed as rocket scientists during the first year after they left the institution.

Standard

The desired outcome to which actual results are compared.

Example: One of the outcomes of the rocket science program was that 100% of the students who graduated were employed as rocket scientists during the first year after they left the institution. We are pleased with this result because we had set a standard of "Eighty percent of the students who graduate should be employed as rocket scientists during the first year after they left the institution."

Student achievement

Student achievement is how much students learn and develop while they are at the institution. A more precise definition would be the amount of intellectual and social growth which has occurred since the student entered the institution.

Example: In evaluating student achievement, it was found that 100% of the rocket science graduates successfully passed the program exit assessment.

Example: From surveying the employers of former students, it was found that 90% of the employers were more than satisfied with rocket science graduates.

Goal completion rate

The percentage of students completing their educational goals. Each student defines his or her educational goal and evaluates whether that goal has been accomplished. Goals may include, but are not restricted to, degrees or certificates.

Example: In a survey of former students it was found that the overall completion rate was 80%, with 7 out of 10 students completing their goal of obtaining a degree, and 9 out of 10 students completing their goal of updating their knowledge of rocket science.

Student satisfaction

Student satisfaction is students' perception that: 1) their experience at the institution has been pleasing, and 2) that the institution has contributed to the achievement of their goals.

Example: In a survey of rocket science graduates, respondents reported that the training received at MCC more than adequately prepared them for their job.

Evaluation and assessment

They are synonyms for the process of measuring whether the institution has accomplished its goals or whether the desired outcomes have been achieved.

Example: In last year's assessment of institutional effectiveness, it was found that 90% of the goals were accomplished.

Variance

The difference between the outcomes (results) and the standard. Favorable variances occur when outcomes exceed the standard. Conversely, unfavorable variances occur when outcomes are below standards. Variances indicate areas which should be further investigated.

Example: There was a positive variance of 20% because 80% of the students finished the rocket science program compared to the standard of 60%.

III. Conceptual Framework for Assessing Student Outcomes

Does the College make a positive difference in students' lives??? In this section a framework is proposed for answering this fundamental question. Within the framework, student outcomes are divided into three separate factors: student achievement, goal completion and student satisfaction. Each factor provides a different perspective and it is necessary to consider all three factors to gain a full picture of institutional effectiveness in educating and developing students. The following subsections discuss each of these factors in turn.

Student Achievement

Student achievement is how much students learn and develop while they are at the institution. Measuring student achievement provides a way to evaluate whether the institution is continuing to provide quality instruction.

It is neither cost effective nor practical to prove that the institution is the cause of student achievement. To prove that student growth in knowledge and skills occurred while a student was enrolled would require that students be both pre and post-tested. The cost of developing and administering two tests is prohibitive and testing students twice would be an imposition on them. Even with pre and post testing, it could not be conclusively shown that the institution was the cause of the student's success. Other factors such as maturation or the effect of work experiences can be significant causes of student achievement. Without highly controlled experiments, it would be impossible to isolate the institution as the cause of student achievement. As a consequence, it is recommended that the institution make the practical and cost effective assumption that there is a direct connection between student achievement and instruction. It could be assumed that if students have the required knowledge and skills upon reaching certain benchmarks, that their competence is the result of the instruction received.

The traditional approach of only evaluating the knowledge and skills of graduates of certificate and degree programs is not appropriate in a community college. Relying entirely on data from graduates would be misleading due to the nature of community college students.

At a traditional junior college most students attend full-time and are seeking an associate degree. In contrast, the typical community college student attends part-time for several years and does not graduate. Quite often individuals do not complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree at a community college for good reason. Four-year degree programs often require 300 and 400 level courses in a student's sophomore year, which means that students are often best advised to complete their general education requirements and then transfer. The result is a number of graduates too small to provide statistically reliable data about the performance of the student body as a whole.

In addition, many community college students have goals other than completing a formal program of study. Instead, they want to take classes which will enable them to obtain employment, improve their work skills or pursue personal interests. Focusing solely on graduates would miss these students who comprise a significant portion of the student body.

Community college students often attend sporadically. A typical pattern is part-time attendance with "stopping out" at various times. Given the graduation and attendance patterns of community college students, it is necessary to evaluate their performance on an ongoing basis. It is proposed that a student's achievement be assessed at several points during his or her career at the institution. Points of assessment would be benchmark courses which marked the completion of a portion of a program of study.

Using interim points for assessment has a number of advantages. Ongoing assessment provides a means of assessing the achievement of students who do not

complete a formal program of study. Sampling student achievement over time provides reliable data and is cost effective because not every student is being assessed. Finally, ongoing assessment would provide timely data upon which to base plans for institutional improvement.

Ongoing assessment using benchmarks is one of the key features of the proposed assessment system; another is the use of common instruments for measuring student achievement. It would be convenient if grades could be used as valid indicators of student achievement. While grades may effectively measure student performance in a particular section of a course, they can not be validly compared across the institution. Comparing grades among sections of courses taught by various faculty is invalid because of variations in grading practices. At Mohave Community College, there is even more variability as most of the high enrollment courses are taught by a variety of faculty in a number of different locations.

The research of Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini casts further doubt on the usefulness of grades for student assessment. In 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini completed a review of ". . . nearly every major research report concerned with the impact of college on students in books, monographs, journals, and non-published sources since 1967." In their review entitled, *How College Effects Students*, they cited numerous studies using student grade point averages as the measurement of student assessment and reached the following conclusions:

> . . . we have concluded from our current review of the literature that there may be too many problems in the reliability and validity of grade point average to consider it solely, or perhaps even primarily as a measure of how much was learned during college. To some extent, grades clearly do reflect learning and may well be our most readily available measure. At the same time, however, it is equally clear that grades are influenced by many other factors. These include the type, racial composition and academic selectivity of the institution attended. . . we have not considered grades primarily as a measure of knowledge acquisition. Rather, we have chosen to treat grade point average primarily as a measure of the extent to

which the student successfully complies with academic norms or requirements of the institution. (62-63)

The best way to validly measure student achievement is to use common measuring instruments. Using a common instrument would insure that variations in student achievement are real rather than the effect of inaccurate or inconsistent measurement. Common assessment instruments could take several forms and faculty would be responsible for choosing an appropriate approach. One alternative would be a common final exam in benchmark courses. Another approach would be to continue having each faculty member administer his or her own final exam and then having an additional assessment beyond the course. Still another approach would be to use a final exam which included two parts: one part prepared by the teacher for the course and the second part a common assessment used in all courses. All of these approaches have in common the fact that they can provide valid and reliable measurements of student achievement which can be compared across the institution.

It is also recommended that the institution not rely entirely on the results of benchmark and graduation assessments. As previously discussed, while the post-testing approach can produce substantial evidence that the institution is effective, in the end, it can not irrefutably prove institutional effectiveness. To increase confidence in the results of assessment, it is proposed that the institution use additional measures of student achievement. To corroborate the results of knowledge and skill assessment, the institution should measure how well students perform after completing a program or leaving the institution. By using multiple measures---knowledge and skill assessment and graduate follow-up---the institution can gain greater confidence in the findings.

To summarize the discussion thus far, it is proposed that the assessment of student achievement rest on four key premises. First, it should be assumed that student achievement measured by assessment instruments is attributable to the instructional program. Second, multiple measures of student achievement should be used to provide

corroborating evidence. Third, students need to be assessed at various points in their college careers in order to obtain timely and accurate data. Fourth, common assessment instruments should be used in order to provide valid and comparable results.

Goal completion rate

The completion rate is the percentage of students who successfully accomplish their goals. Community college students are not compelled to attend college; they choose to attend college as a way to accomplish their individual goals. The completion rate measures how well the institution is helping students reach their educational goals. Moreover, it is a measure of the institution's productivity. The completion rate measures whether the institution is effective in converting the input of enrolling students into the output of students who have completed their goals.

Evaluating the institution in terms of individual student-defined goals, rather than formal programs of study, has both a philosophical and empirical basis. Philosophically, the institution is committed to helping students achieve their goals as epitomized by the College's slogan, "Your Success Is Our Goal."

Based on historical enrollment data, it is more realistic to measure accomplishment of student goals rather than completion of degrees or certificates. Many students complete a substantial number of credits, but few earn a degree or certificate. Obviously, there are many students who have definite goals and those goals often are not described in terms of formal programs of study. As a consequence, the proposed approach is to ask students to define their goals and subsequently ask them whether they have completed their goals.

In assessing the rate at which students complete their goals, it is proposed that the institution make the same assumption as in student achievement. It should be assumed that students who completed their goals did so because of the institution.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is students' perception that: 1) their experience at the institution has been pleasing, and 2) that the institution has contributed to the achievement of their goals. The institution exists to serve students; therefore, students' perceptions of the institution are of paramount importance. The only way to collect data on student attitudes is to ask the individuals themselves.

The perceptions of both current and former students are of interest. The perceptions of current students are useful because they reflect the institution as it is and they can provide timely data which the institution can use to improve. Former students provide an additional perspective as they have experience beyond the institution. Former students can evaluate their education from the perspective of how well it has prepared them for their personal and professional lives. To obtain a complete picture, the category of former students should include not only those who graduated or fulfilled their goals, but also those who left before graduating or fulfilling their goals.

Standards

Measurements without standards of comparison are meaningless. Standards are needed to determine whether levels of student achievement, completion rates and student satisfaction are insufficient, adequate or exceptional. In this proposal, initial standards are suggested. These beginning standards are based on government regulations and available institutional data. Proposing the final standards would be the responsibility of faculty and staff implementing the assessment.

Role and Limits of Assessment

The proposed assessment system can measure institutional effectiveness and identify areas of success or concern. Assessment, however, does not provide explanations for the results; instead, it pinpoints areas where further investigation is needed. The system is designed to provide data to program coordinators and faculty which will enable them to develop their plan for institutional improvement.

Assessment is then an essential, but only first step, in the process of institutional improvement.

Summary

By using multiple factors--student achievement, goal completion rate and student satisfaction--the institution can acquire sufficient data to validate both student achievement and institutional effectiveness. In validating achievement and effectiveness, the institution will be taking the first step toward institutional improvement.

In summary, it is proposed that the following concepts be used in assessing student outcomes at Mohave Community College:

General

1. Assessing student outcomes involves evaluating student achievement, goal completion rate and student satisfaction.

Student Achievement

2. Student achievement is the amount of intellectual and social growth achieved while at the institution.

3. It is assumed that if a student is competent in the knowledge and skills taught in a course; he or she acquired that competency at the institution.

4. It is assumed that if a degree or certificate graduate is competent in the knowledge and skills taught in the program; he or she acquired that competency at the institution.

5. Student achievement needs to be measured on both a program and benchmark by benchmark basis.

Goal Completion

6. Student achievement needs to be measured frequently enough to avoid missing transitory students.

7. The fact that many students have highly individual goals is taken into account in assessing student achievement.

8. Goal completion rate is the percentage of students who complete their goals.

9. Goals are defined by the student and may or may not be a formal course of study.

10. Measurement of goal completion involves asking students about whether they have completed their goals and how well the institution contributed to goal accomplishment.

Student Satisfaction

11. Student satisfaction is a student's perception that: 1) his or her experience at the institution has been pleasing, and 2) that the institution has contributed to the achievement of personal goals.

12. Measurement of student satisfaction involves asking students about their perceptions about their experiences at the institution.

Standards

13. Standards should enable the institution to determine whether rates of student achievement, completion and satisfaction are insufficient, adequate or exceptional.

14. Standards should incorporate the expectations of faculty, students, employers and other colleges and universities.

IV. Implementation of Student Outcomes Assessment

This section outlines the assessment system and its implementation. The following series of tables outline the outcomes, questions, measures and standards for each of the purposes identified in the College's Mission and Purposes statement. Preceding the table is a list of the basic skills and general education benchmark courses. Following the table is a discussion of the six different cohorts which would be identified in the assessment system. Student demographics for the Spring 1993 semester are presented to provide a idea of the numbers involved in assessment. A summary table is then presented showing the cohorts, instruments and data to be used in assessment. The section concludes with a project timetable for implementation.

Basic Skills and General Education Benchmark Courses

Note: "Writing across the curriculum" is a part of all general education courses. Assessment of writing skills would be a part of <u>each</u> general education benchmark assessment, along with evaluation of subject knowledge and competencies.

BENCHMARKS	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENT
ENGLISH 085	Achieve college entrance level reading	Assess student competencies
ENGLISH 089	Achieve college entrance level English competence	Assess student competencies
MATHEMATICS 031	Achieve college entrance level math skills	Assess student competencies
ENGLISH 102	Achieve minimum college level writing	Assess student competencies
MATHEMATICS 135	Achieve minimum college level math	Assess student competencies
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **HUMANITIES** REQUIREMENT	Achieve Humanities core component objectives	Assess student achievement
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **SOCIAL SCIENCE** REQUIREMENT	Achieve Social Science core component objectives	Assess student achievement
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **SCIENCE** REQUIREMENT	Achieve Science core component objectives	Assess student achievement

Basic Skills

Purpose	To provide instruction for students deficient in the skills of reading, writing and mathematics which will enable students to bring their skills up to a collegiate level.

General notes	A basic skills program is defined as the basic skills courses a student should take based on his/her performance on the ASSET exam. Programs are individualized and could range from one course to several courses.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Achievement Knowledge and skill level at benchmark completion points **(ENG 085, ENG 089, MAT 031)**	Did students who passed benchmarks have the knowledge and skills expected of students reaching this educational level?	Percentage of students passing the departmental benchmark course assessment	95%
Achievement Performance after leaving the program	How did the classroom performance of former basic skills students compare with the performance of students who had collegiate level skills when they were admitted?	Comparison of grade distributions of former basic skills students with students who did not take basic skills courses	The grades of former basic skills students will be equal to or better than the grades of students who did not take basic skills classes.
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Current students	What were the perceptions of current students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of current students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Former students	What were the perceptions of former students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

Degree Seeking

Purpose	To provide classes beyond general education which will enable students to earn a two-year degree at the College and/or earn credits toward a four year degree.

General notes	To be counted as degree-seeking, a student must have elected a two-year degree designed for transfer or program of study designed for transfer.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Achievement Knowledge and skill level at completion of degree	Did the students who completed a degree have the required knowledge and skill levels described in the degree objectives?	Percentage of students passing the program exit assessment	95%
Achievement Performance of graduates: certification and licensure	Of the students who took certification or licensing exams, how many passed?	Percentage of students who passed certification or licensure exams	95%
Achievement Performance after transfer	How did the performance of former students compare with the performance of the other students at the transfer institution?	Comparison of grade point average between former students and the other students at the transfer institution	The grade point average of former will be equal to or better than the grade point average of other students at the transfer institution
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Student who completed a degree	What were the perceptions of the students who completed a degree about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Students who did not complete a degree	What were the perceptions of the students who did not complete a degree about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

General Education

Purpose	To provide for all degree and certificate seeking students an integrated common core of instruction which teaches verbal and numerical literacy, provides a scientific, historical and social perspective, fosters an appreciation of the arts, teaches students to think critically and prepares them to participate in a global society.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Achievement Knowledge and skill level at completion of benchmark points **(See below for list of general education benchmarks)**	Did students who reached benchmarks have the knowledge and skills expected of students reaching this educational level ?	Percentage of students passing the departmental benchmark assessment	95%
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Current students	What were the perceptions of current students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of current students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Former students	What were the perceptions of former students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

General Education Benchmarks
ENGLISH 102
MATHEMATICS 135
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **HUMANITIES** REQUIREMENT
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **SOCIAL SCIENCE** REQUIREMENT
COMPLETION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION **SCIENCE** REQUIREMENT

Occupational Continuing Education

Purpose	To provide training which will enable individuals who are already employed to meet their individual needs for updated skills and knowledge.

General notes	Students enrolled in state vocationally approved courses or workshops or who are not enrolled in an occupational program will be considered continuing occupational students.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Student who completed a course	What were the perceptions of the students who completed a course about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Students who did not complete a course	What were the perceptions of the students who did not complete a course about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

Occupational Entry/Re-entry

Purpose	To provide occupational training which will enable individuals to gain entry level employment in selected occupations.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Achievement Knowledge and skill level at completion of certificate program	Did the students who completed a program have the required knowledge and skill levels described in the program competencies?	Percentage of students passing the program exit assessment	95%
Achievement Performance of graduates: certification and licensure	Of the students who took certification or licensing exams, how many passed?	Percentage of students who passed certification or licensure exams	95%
Achievement Performance of graduates: employment	How many former students successfully gained employment in the field in which they trained?	Percentage of graduates who gained employment in the field in which they trained.	Meet state mandated standard of 95% of former students successfully employed in the field in which they trained.
Achievement Performance of graduates: employer satisfaction	Were employers satisfied with the level of skills and knowledge of graduates?	Percentage of employers responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of knowledge and skills of graduates	95% of the employers reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of skills and knowledge of graduates?
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Current students	What were the perceptions of current students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of current students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Former students	What were the perceptions of former students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

Personal Interest

Purpose	To provide opportunities for students to meet their individual goals for social and intellectual growth.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their goals?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they had successfully accomplished their goals	90%
Satisfaction Students who completed the courses	What were the perceptions of students who completed the courses about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of current students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%
Satisfaction Students who did not complete the courses	What were the perceptions of non-completing students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education received?	Percentage of former students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the education received	90%

Student Development

Purpose	To provide training and experiences which will enable students to gain a greater understanding of themselves, their personal development, their abilities to work with others and the career opportunities available.

Student Outcomes	Questions	Outcome Measures	Standards
Achievement Knowledge at completion of courses such as AED 058 and AED 059 and workshops	Did students who avail themselves of student development courses and workshops gain a better understanding of themselves from these offerings?	Percentage of students who completed the courses and completed an exit survey	95%
Achievement Knowledge at completion of leadership activities	Did the students who held the leadership positions in the extra-curricular activities improve their leadership skills?	Completion of student leadership survey	95%
Goal Completion Rate	How many students successfully accomplished their personal development goals?	Percentage of completing students who reported they had successfully completed their goals	90%
Satisfaction Students who completed the courses	What were the perceptions of students who completed the courses about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the knowledge received?	Percentage of completors responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the knowledge received	90%
Satisfaction Students who did not complete the courses.	What were the perceptions of non-completing students about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the knowledge received?	Percentage of non-completing students responding who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the knowledge received	90%

Student Cohorts

The assessment system identifies six student cohorts: 1) students currently enrolled; 2) students who have reached a benchmark point; 3) students who have

completed certificates and degrees; 4) students who have left without graduating,; 5) students completing personal interest, personal development and vocational continuing education classes; and 6) employers of former students. Each group will be impacted by different aspects of the assessment system.

Students currently enrolled will be selected on a sample basis. This could be done by the computer or by classes. Example: All students completing fifteen hours or all students enrolled in English 101. Surveys could either be mailed to the students or administered to them in class.

Students who have reached benchmark points, completed degrees or certificates will require an achievement assessment. This would be created and administered by the departments. How it would be done will be determined by the type of assessment instrument chosen. The benchmark point achieved by completing a specific class, i.e., ENG 089 or MAT 135 could be completed in class, however, the core benchmark, certificate and degree completors would have to be assessed outside of class. To clarify these requirements for the students, assessment should be stated in the College catalog; i.e., completion of the core social science requirement is one class from each group and completion of final assessment.

Former students are defined as students who attended two semesters and left the institution without graduating. Former students would include students who transferred to the university and students who remained in the community. The students transferring to the universities would be identified by the reports sent to MCC from the universities. Students who are no longer in attendance would be identified from student enrollment data. A random sample of former students would be mailed Follow-up questionnaires from the Student Outcomes Coordinator. After the questionnaires have been returned, students could be separated into goal completors and non-completors based on their responses.

Students completing personal interest, personal development and vocational continuing education classes would be identified by the computer. Follow-up questionnaires would be mailed to a random sample of these students by the Student Outcomes Coordinator.

Employers of program completors would be identified by the current Exiting Student Information Form completed when the student applies for graduation. This form asks the students for their current employer or future employer if known at graduation. Also, all vocational programs are currently required to know where their graduates are working. Consequently, identifying employers will not be a major task. These employers would be mailed a questionnaire by the Student Outcomes Coordinator.

Non-organized Program Areas

Each degree area will need to establish competencies. The degree which would pose the greatest challenge is Liberal Arts. This degree represents the largest number of graduates outside of the Health Science area. The challenge will be that one third of the degree is elective and is not organized into a program area.

Survey Construction and Administration

The creation and administration of the Satisfaction and Follow-up surveys will be the responsibility of the Student Outcomes Coordinator. However, since these surveys are so critical to the various college areas, they should not be created without input from the areas surveyed. Consequently, the questionnaires will be drafted by the Outcomes Coordinator and submitted to the respective college areas for their review. The following table details the timetable for designing and implementing surveys.

Cohorts, Instruments and Data

The following chart outlines the cohorts, assessment instruments and statistical data needed on each cohort.

EXHIBITS

NORTH CENTRAL

ASSOCIATION

Position on

ASSESSING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Commission Statement on Assessment and Student Academic Achievement

The Commission affirms that the evaluation/accreditation process offers both a means of providing public assurance of an institution's effectiveness and a stimulus to institutional improvement. The Commission's criteria require an institution to demonstrate the clarity and appropriateness of its purposes as a postsecondary educational institution; to show that it has adequate human, financial, and physical resources effectively organized for the accomplishment of those purposes; to confirm its effectiveness in accomplishing all of its purposes; and to provide assurance that it can continue to be an effective institution. A variety of assessment approaches in its evaluation processes strengthens the institution's ability to document its effectiveness.

The Commission reaffirms its position that assessment is an important element in an institution's overall evaluation processes. The Commission does not prescribe a specific approach to assessment. That determination should be made by the institution in terms of its own purposes, resources, and commitments. Assessment is not an end in itself, but a means of gathering information that can be used in evaluating the institution's ability to accomplish its purposes in a number of areas. An assessment program, to be effective, should provide information that assists the institution in making useful decisions about the improvement of the institution and in developing plans for that improvement. An institution is expected to describe in its self-study the ways that it evaluates its effectiveness and how those results are used to plan for institutional improvement.

The commission wants to make clear that all institutions are expected to assess the achievement of their students. With this statement we make explicit the Commission's position that student achievement is a critical component in assessing overall institutional effectiveness. Our expectation is that an institution has and is able to describe a program by which it documents student academic achievement.

Approved by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, October 27, 1989.

North Central Association
METHOD STATEMENT

"An institution should consider a broad range of institutional outcomes, but it must have and describe a program by which it documents student academic achievement."

To assist the institution in thinking through a broad range of institutional outcomes, the Commission provides the following suggestions.

> All institutions should develop a variety of measures of student academic achievement. They might include documenting the success of students in moving to the next level of education: how many transfer to baccalaureate programs and how well do they do, how many seek admission to graduate or professional schools and what percentage gain admission, and so forth. Some programs might culminate in licensing exams while others might require that students take standardized exams: Both provide evidence of student achievement. Some institutions require senior comprehensives, senior theses, or review by external examiners, all of which are appropriate ways to assess student achievement. Prizes, honors, and fellowships gained by students speak to their academic achievements. Students taking curricula leading to careers or job placement often measure achievement by the speed and ease of finding appropriate employment. Alumni studies might ask students to assess the adequacy of the institution's educational programs.

A Guide to Self-Study for Commission Evaluation, 1990-1992

North Central Association
PROCESS STATEMENT

All institutions must have and be able to describe a program by which they document student academic achievement. Some institutions will have a program in place, others will need to develop a plan for implementing such a program. Institutions scheduled for evaluation before June 1995 will have their assessment plans or programs reviewed by evaluation teams. Institutions scheduled for evaluation after 1995 will be reviewed by an Assessment Plan Review Process.

Institutions preparing for evaluation teams will document their assessment plans or programs in their Self-Study Reports. Institutions submitting plans for the Assessment Plan Review Process should submit a written report that is approximately five to ten pages in length. Reports may be submitted any time after January 1, 1992; all reports must be filed by June 30, 1995. In either case, the material should document the following Components of an Assessment Plan.

1. The plan is linked to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution.
2. The plan is carefully articulated and is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope.
3. The plan leads to institutional improvement.
4. The plan is being implemented according to a timeline.
5. The plan is administered.

A Handbook of Accreditation, 1992-1993

ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The Assessment Plan Review Process will place the plan in one of the following categories:

* **Exemplary.** An assessment plan is exemplary when:

--- the five Components of an Assessment Plan have been met;

--- the conceptualization, articulation, and institutional support for the plan are outstanding;

--- partial or full implementation of the plan has occurred;

--- the assessment plan has been evaluated by the institution.

When an assessment plan is judged to be exemplary, the institution is notified and the plan is placed in the institution's file. The institution may also be asked to consider giving permission for the staff to share the plan with others.

* **Acceptable.** An assessment plan is acceptable when the five Components of an Assessment Plan have been satisfied.

* **Not acceptable.** An assessment plan is not acceptable when the five Components of an Assessment Plan have not been satisfied.

When an assessment plan is judged to be not acceptable, the institution is notified of the deficiencies in the plan. The institution is asked to correct the problems and resubmit the plan the following year.

If an acceptable plan is not received by June 1995, the institution will be scheduled for a focused evaluation.

A Handbook of Accreditation, 1992-1993